

Server Side Data Collection with Edge Network Server API

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What we heard

- “We have lost visibility into how the web site is performing because users are opting out of cookies.”
- “Our legal team will not let us collect data unless a user opts in.”
- “Does Adobe have a solution to be able to collect data even if users are opted out of cookies?”

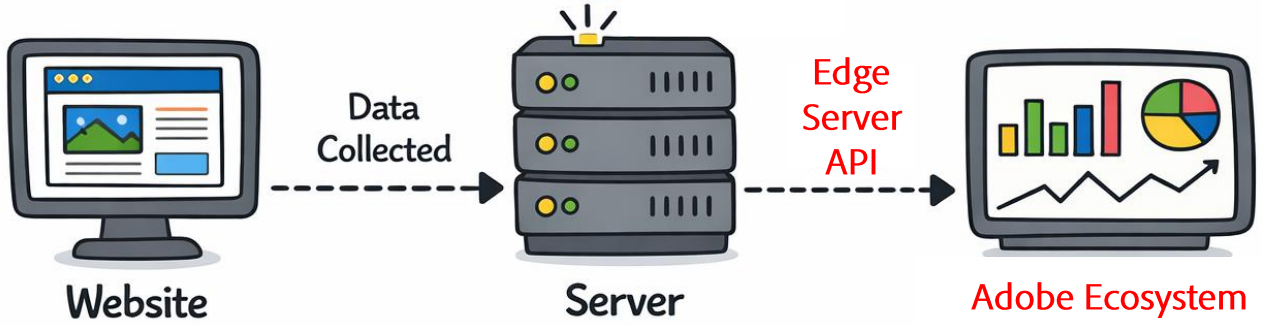


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Web Site Data Collection



Customer approval from their legal team is required. Adobe does not provide legal guidance.



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Purpose

Problem:

Our customers' legal teams are adopting a default cookie opt-out policy. This is a major pain point because visitors to their website are not opting-in to cookies, which means they are losing ~90% or more of their analytics traffic.

Solution:

Our customers are asking if there is anything Adobe can do to help restore their data, and the answer is yes, server-side data collection using the Adobe Edge Server API

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Quick Primer on Cookies

- **What Cookies Do**
  - Store small pieces of data in the user's browser (e.g., session ID, preferences).
  - Help websites remember users between page loads or visits.
- **Why Cookies Were Created**
  - Enable persistent sessions (so you stay logged in).
  - Personalize experiences (remember language, cart items).
  - Support analytics and advertising by identifying repeat visitors.
- **Why Cookies Are Not Necessary for Data Collection**
  - Modern tracking can use server-side IDs or device fingerprints instead.
  - Data can be sent directly from the server or via APIs without relying on browser storage.
  - Privacy regulations and browser restrictions make cookie-based tracking less reliable.

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Legal Implications

When talking with the customer about server-side data collection the following are imperative to cover with the customer.

- Adobe cannot and will not advise as to what data can or cannot be legally collected.
- The customer must clear the approach with their legal team, and the legal team must advise as to what is permissible to capture and what is not.

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What data points are available for collection?

- The first step is to ensure customer has approval from the legal team to use server side data collection along with the data points that have been approved for collection.
- **It is possible to collect any data point** that the Adobe customer would like to capture.

- Commonly, the requirement from legal teams is something along the lines of **"no PII or persistent identifiers; anonymous data"**.
  - We would still need a list of legal-approved data points from the customer, as we can still collect a lot of information that doesn't meet this criteria.
  - **Key Callout**: This would be done by sending a **new ECID on each page view** event call that a visitor has to a website through the Edge Network Server API. This means that any **unique visitor or visit/session metrics will be useless** because each time the ECID is reset, that means a new visit and a new visitor.

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How does identity stitching work with server-side data collection?

- Remember that this solution is an answer to customers who have opted-out of cookies, so more than likely these customers will not want any identifiable data collected.
- How is this data stitched back to AEP?
  - Identity stitching in AEP works the same way it does using the client-side Web SDK to send data to the Experience Edge. You still ingest data using XDM schemas and mark certain fields as identities. When two or more identity fields arrive in the same record, Identity service links them together as a relationship in the private identity graph.

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Impact of Server Side Data Collection on AEP Services

- How does this impact Adobe Target? We can do a follow up session
- What are the latency expectations for data availability in CJA?
  - There is no additional latency introduced with server side data collection
  - So the latency depends on how quickly AEP processes and makes data available for CJA (usually 90 minutes).
  - Events are processed in near real-time at Edge and streamed into AEP.
- Are there any other considerations?
  - No automatic ECID generation
  - Limited built-in features (eg. Native consent handling, browser context like screen size, user age, page URL)
  - Debugging is difficult

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Do customers need both client and server side data collection?

- Clients do not need to deploy both and typically **one methodology** is chosen for data collection in order ensure consistent and manageable infrastructure

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Server Side Data Collection: Level of Effort

- Level of effort is high.
- The customer must configure their server to communicate with Adobe's server using the Edge Network Server API

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Prerequisites

- Can be use with AA or CJA – good CJA upsell opportunity
- Still standardizing on the XDM schema.
- HIGHLY recommend that Adobe customer sets First Part Device ID (FPID)
- ECID must be set in identity map, per Edge requirements.
- What resources are needed to implement or deploy?
  - Server Environment
  - HTTPS Client Library (eg. Node.js - axios, fetch, Python - requests, Java/C#: HttpClient)
  - Adobe Developer Console Access
  - Datastream setup
  - schema and dataset in AEP
  - FPID
  - authentication tokens

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What's Next

- If you have a customer interested in discussing server side data collection, you'll want to set the expectation that it will require work from our ACS team.
- You can reach out to Jennifer Kraft, and we can determine what resources are needed on follow up call with the customer.
- Scott Neely has also scoped out some of these projects, so he is familiar with this process.

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Adobe

What do we mean by cookieless data collection?

- Since server side data collection is cookieless, it can be used by Adobe Customers who have lost visibility into website performance due to opt-out cookie consent.
  - Note if a site visitor is opted-out of cookies & the have the Web SDK implemented, the Web SDK will still set consent cookies that exist merely to remember that visitor's consent preferences page-to-page. The Adobe customer can turn these cookies off, but it would result in the Adobe customer having to manually manage consent preferences.

- Granular consent: <3% of visitors choose granular consent options and it's difficult to separate performance data from targeting data, Adobe has decided not to prioritize granular consent in Edge Data Collection. The current all-on/all-off consent model has little practical impact compared to traditional granular consent approaches.

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